THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) Based on the information furnished by University Grants Commission (UGC), there are 415 universities/institutions in the country as on 31.12.2007 and 6680 Colleges under Section 2(f) and 12 (B) of UGC Act, 1956, out of the 20,676 colleges in the country as on 31.3.2007.

(b) No such data is maintained in the Ministry. All universities and colleges, whether in urban, rural or other areas (semi-urban, hill, etc.) are poviding higher education in the country.

(c) The UGC has selected 97 colleges under the Scheme of Potential for Excellence during the X Plan. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), an Inter University Centre, of UGC, has assessed and accredited 3523 Colleges as on 04.02.2008.

(d) National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) has raised the issue of lack of employability of engineering graduates in IT and IT-enabled Services (ITeS) Sectors. This is attributable, *inter alia,* to inadequate levels of communication and IT skills in engineering graduates.

Decrease in research scholars

t966. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA:
SHR1BHAGWATI SINGH: SHRI
BRIJ BHUSHAN TIWARI:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the number of research scholars has come down due to not being provided better job opportunities to research scholars by Government;

(b) whether it is also a fact that acute shortage of teachers who lay the foundation of education, is also its major reason;

(c) if so, whether Government would implement any plan of action to develop the attitude among students towards higher education and to give more employment opportunities to highly educated students; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

TrffiMIhflSTCROFSTAreiNTrffiMINISTOYOFHUMANRESOU^ (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (d) Keeping in view the declining quality and quantum of scientific research in India, a Task Force under the Chairmanship of Prof. M.M. Sharma was constituted by the Central Government for basic Scientific Research in universities. In its Report, the Task Force, has *inter-alia,* recommended creation of 1000 positions of Research Scientists at various levels. The recommendations of the Task Force have been accepted by Government, and the Task Force has been converted to an Empowered Committee to implement the recommendations. The University Grants Commission has taken initiative for augmenting research and teaching resources of universities.

Intensification of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

t967. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

tOriginal notice of the question was received in Hindi.